

23
Religion and Loyalty

RECOMMENDED:

From the History of PIOUS PRINCES
Ministring to the CHURCH, as fore-
told by *Isaiab.* Chap. 60. Vers. 10.

A
SERMON,

Preach'd at the Lecture in St. Michael's
Church in *Lewes*, on Thursday, Nov.
25. A. D. 1714.

By Ezekiel Bristed, *Rector of Meeching, alias
New-Haven, in Suffex, and Chaplain to
the Right Honourable the Earl of Clare.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. How, in Talbot-Court, in Grace-Church-
Street, and Sold by Mr. Wilkin, at the Kings-Head,
Mr. Bonwick, at the Red-Lyon, and Mr. Robinson,
in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and Mr. Clark, in
Cheapside, Booksellers. Price 3d.

Religious and Literary

REVISED

THE HISTORY OF THE
RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY
INSTITUTIONS IN THE
CITY OF LONDON

TERMON

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25
TO THE
Right Honourable
T H O M A S,
EARL of
CLARE.

My Lord,

YOUR Lordship being a great Example of
the Loyalty taught in the following Sermon,
as having in all your Actions frankly shewn your
Steady and most Invincible Zeal for the Service
of His Majesty, and the Publick Good and Wel-
fare of your Country, makes this Dedication
proper, and your Favours to me make it my Du-
ty. I hope my honest and well-meant Zeal will
be acceptable to your Lordship, but am sensible
that this Discourse, and the Publishing of it,
would need a better Excuse than I am able to
make,

make, had not the restless Enemies of the King
and Government made this Doctrine, more
especially at this time, exceeding necessary both
to be Preach'd and Publish'd. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's,

most Devoted Chaplain,

most Obedient, and most

Humble Servant,

Ezekiel Bristed.

SERMON, &c.

Isaiah 60. 10.

*The Sons of Strangers shall Build up thy Walls,
and their Kings shall Minister unto thee.*

SO clearly does *Isaiah* Prophecy of Christ, that the Antients style him the *Fifth Evangelist*.
In reading him, says St. Hierome, I seem to be reading one of the Gospels. (a)

The Person, the Sufferings and the Glories of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, are so fully, so evidently describ'd by this Prophet, that the Reading of him has converted the greatest Infidels. (b)

And the fulfilling of his Prophecies in Gospel-times, does (among many other Invincible Arguments) demonstrate the Truth of the Christian Religion.

But all his Prophecies, as the Learned observe,
“ were not to cease when but once accomplished;
“ but many of them were to continue still in force;
“ to shine forth again in After-Ages, in extraordinary Persons and Events, to mind the World
“ that

A 2

(a) Cor. a Lapide in *Isai.* p. 47. (b) Vid. Bp. Burnet's *Life of Rochester*.

“ that 'tis still Govern'd by the same God, by the
 “ same Providence. (a)

Of this kind is the Promise in the Text, *The Sons of Strangers shall Build up thy Walls, and their Kings shall Minister unto thee.*

The Sons of Strangers is an Hebrew Phrase for *Strangers*, and by these *Strangers* are meant the *Gentiles*; these shall be *Converted to the Faith of Christ*, and *their Kings* shall become the *Patrons of his Church*.

Καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς ἀνῶν παραστήσουσί σοι, as it is in the Septuagint, *their Kings shall Assist*, or as here translated, *Minister unto thee.*

We have here a Glorious Representation of the Christian Church, under the notion of a Kingdom, or rather the Happiness, the Glories of a Kingdom, when United with the Church. (b)

“ Then is *Sion* a strong, an eminent Place indeed, the Glory of the World, the Joy of all the
 “ *Ends of the Earth*, when thus protected, thus blest
 “ and favour'd, both by the God of Heaven, and
 “ the Gods upon Earth.

“ Then is the Church like a City upon an Hill, too
 “ Eminent to be conceal'd, too Strong to be Sub-
 “ du'd

“ All that the Piety, or even the Ambition of
 “ Man can wish for in this World, is here promis'd,
 “ and now fulfill'd, or rather still fulfilling to the
 “ Christian Church and to our selves.

That we therefore of this Church and Nation may be all sensible of our own Happiness, and thankful for it; that we may take our share in the Triumphs

as

(a) Dr. Adams Ser. on *Marth* 8. (b) Dr. Hickman's Ser. before the House of Commons.

as well as in the Hardships of Religion, I shall shew.

1. Unto what Church and People this Promise does belong, or was more especially design'd.

2. When, and how oft it has been, and may yet be fulfill'd.

3. I shall make Application, and shew what Use we are all to make of this Promise, and of this Discourse.

1. Unto what Church it belongs, and was more especially design'd.

It was at first propos'd and deliver'd to the *Jews*, to support and comfort 'em in their Afflicted State, with the Prospect and Assurance of better Times.

The Prophet here alludes to the Walls of *Jerusalem* (a) which were destroy'd and raz'd at their sad Captivity, and built up again at their Return from it, by the special Favour of the *Persian* Kings, (b) as you may read at large in *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, in (c) *Esdra*s and *Josephus*, and others Authors, who writ the History of the *Jewish* Church.

But the Prediction and Promise in the Text does more peculiarly relate to *Christians*, and was far from being fully accomplished in the *Jewish* Church, or perform'd to the *Jews* as a Civil State.

For they were soon after led into Captivity; and after the Return of the two Tribes (for but two return'd) they were frequently oppress'd by the *Syrian* Kings; at last entirely conquer'd by the *Romans*, and by them dispers'd and scatter'd into all parts of the World, as they continue to this day.

The Promise therefore must needs refer to the

A 3

Christian

(a) Grotius in locum. Pool's Annot. Menochius & Tirinus apud Biblia Magna. Edit. Paris. (b) *Esr.* 1. *Neb.* 2. *Esc.* (c) 1 *Esdra*s, Ch. 2. *Esc.* *Joseph.* Antiq. L. 11, C. 1, 4, 5.

Christian Church, which arose and sprung from the Church of the *Jews*, and is to continue till the Day of Judgment.

Tho' the Gospel may be taken from one Nation, (as it has often been for the Wickedness of it) yet it shall be graciously given (a) to another.

A Church there shall always be, and the *Gates of Hell* shall never be able to prevail against it. Matt. 16. 18.

Christ, in the last Words he spake upon Earth, (b) promis'd to be always with it, even unto the end of the World.

He will always make it his peculiar Care, and by the powerful Influence of his Grace and Providence, *The Sons of Strangers shall Build up its Walls, and Kings themselves shall Minister unto it.*

2. The next Thing to be consider'd is, when, and how oft, this Promise of God, and Prediction of his Prophet, has been accomplished and perform'd already, and may yet be fulfill'd in future Ages.

It seem'd a little to shine, to begin to be fulfill'd to the *Jewish Church*, at the Return of the two Tribes from their long Captivity, when (as before related) the *Persian Kings* permitted and encourag'd the Re-building of the Temple and City of *Jerusalem*.

But the Prophecy shone forth again in a glorious Manner, and was eminently fulfill'd to the whole *Christian Church*, (for which chiefly 'twas design'd) when the *Gentiles*, in great Numbers, flock'd in to it, and the Emperours themselves embrac'd *Christianity*.

When (as the same Prophet has foretold, the same God had promis'd, *Isa. 49. 23.*) *Kings were its Nursing Fathers, and their Queens its Nursing Mothers.*

In a Word, It has been, is, and will be fulfill'd, as oft as *Christian States and Princes* (as their Duty and truest

(a) Matt. 21. 43. (b) Matt. 28. 20.

truest Interest is) become the Faithful, Zealous Patrons of the true Church, and the true Religion, as Christ and his holy Apostles left it, without the *Leaven (a) and Additions (b) of Men.*

But to come to Particulars :

After God had shewn that his Church could live and thrive by his own Blessing, and his Internal Grace; that it could subsist and encrease too unto mighty Numbers, for about three Hundred Years, not only without the Smiles or Favour of *Kings and Emperours*, but amidst their Frowns and cruel Persecutions, he, to reward the Constancy of *Christians*, to comfort and encourage 'em after all their Sufferings, rais'd up the Great, the Pious *Constantine*, in whom this Promise and Prophecy in the Text seems to be fully and literally fulfill'd.

So Generous his Temper, so Great his Piety and Zeal for Religion, that he made it his first and chiefeft care to *Build up the Walls* of the lately Oppress'd and Afflicted Church, and with great Chearfulness and great Bounty Ministred unto it.

In the Beginning of his glorious Reign (as *Eusebius*, (c) who knew him well, informs us) he was careful to secure his People, for the future, from that *Idolatry*, from which they had been so lately deliver'd; (d) but he did not (like some of our Reformers here, the greatest Scandals of the Reformation) abhor Idols, and commit Sacrilege, reform the Church and rob it.

So far from that, that indeed he thought he could never do too much for the Church, for the Honour, and Encouragement of true Religion.

To

(a) *Matt. 16. 6, 12.* (b) i. e. without Popery. *Mat. 15. 9.* (c) *Vita Constantini. L. 3. C. 48.* (d) *Forbes Instructions, Hist. Theo. p. 325.*

To encourage the Publick Worship of the true God, (as our Late most Gracious Sovereign did) he order'd, " That decayed Churches (a) should be " Repair'd, those too small enlarg'd, and New " ones Built as there was occasion.

Nor were the Ministers of those Churches left to be starv'd, to wrestle with Poverty, or depend on the uncertain Humours of the People, but were honourably supported and provided for by the Publick Laws, and the Bounty of the Emperour.

Nor was this at all Displeasing, but highly acceptable to God, and to all Good Men.

The pretended Voice from Heaven, *Hodie Venenum infunditur in Ecclesiam*, This Day is Poyson pour'd into the Church, was as much a Romance, as groundless and ridiculous as the pretended Donation of this great Emperour to the Church of (b) Rome.

The *Lords-Day*, (as *Eusebius* (c) tells us) he commanded to be kept with the strictest Piety, and would not suffer it to be profan'd.

He suppress the Heresy and Blasphemies of *Arius*, who deny'd the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, but encourag'd the Preachers of sound Doctrine.

At the Council of *Nice*, (which he ordered to be call'd) he exhorted the Clergy to lay by their Animosities, and to consult the Common Good and Peace of the (e) Church.

He endeavour'd to Unite the Minds of Christians, and to Reform the Lives and Manners of Men.

Them that Honour me, says God, I will Honour. 1 Sam. 2. 30. And

(a) *Euseb. vit. Constan. L. 2. C. 45.* (b) *Du Pin Bibliothec. Cent. 4. pag. 17.* (c) *Preface to Church Bible. pag. 1.* (d) *vit. Constantin. L. 4. C. 18.* (e) *Du Pin Bibliothec. Patr. To. 2. p. 250. Euseb. in vita. l. 1. C. 44. Idm. l. 3. C. 12, 13.*

And as this Emperour thus *Honour'd God*, in *Ministring to his Church*, and *Promoting his Religion*, so God was pleas'd to honour him with glorious *Victories (a)* and great *Prosperity*, and his *Immortal Name and Memory* is to this day, and shall be *Blessed*.

Nor was the Text fulfill'd in him alone, but in some good Emperours that succeeded, as *Jovian*, *Valentinian*, *Gratian*, and (to name no more at present) the two Emperours of the Name of *Theodosius*.

All which are extoll'd, by several Historians, *(b)* for their *Zeal and Piety in Ministring to the Church*, and *Promoting not the Form only, but the Power of Godliness*.

Of the Elder *Theodosius* *St. Austin* writes, *(c)* that he was wont to say, *He valued himself more for his being a Christian than an Emperour*.

And the Younger, (as the Church-Historian *Socrates (d)* tells us) made his Palace a School of Piety, where God was constantly prais'd and worship'd.

He honour'd all the Ministers of Christ, especially such as excell'd *(e)* in Piety.

Thus was this Prophecy fulfill'd often, and by several Princes in the Primitive Times.

And after a long Night of Ignorance and Superstition, it shone forth again at the Blessed Reformation begun in *Germany* by the famous *Luther*, encourag'd there by the Elector *(f)* of *Saxony*, here by the Pious *Edward the Sixth*.

But the Time would fail me to speak how gloriously

(a) Idm. L. 1. C. 39. *Socrates Hist. Eccl. L. 1.* *(b)* *Ruffinus, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodor. Nicphorus, &c.* quoted by *Christianus Matthias.* *(c)* Apud C. *Matthias. Theatr. Hist. par. 4. p. 361.* *(d)* Lib. 7. 22. *(e)* *Socrates ibidem.* *(f)* *Sleidan.*

ously (after a short but cruel Persecution, in which our best Reformers seal'd their Doctrine and Religion with their Blood) the Prophecy in the Text shone forth again in this our Country, in the long and glorious Reign of the Immortal *Elizabeth*, who was indeed a *Mother in Israel*, a *Nursing Mother to the Church of Christ*.

And (as one of our latest and best Historians (a) well observes) Heaven was pleas'd greatly to reward and bless a Reign which was begun with the Reformation of Religion.

But we should be guilty of the blackest Ingratitude both to God and Man, if we or our Posterity, should ever forget to mention, with Thankfulness and Honour, our late Deliverer *King William the Third*, of Immortal Memory, and his Glorious Consort, who not only Ministred to the Church, but Sav'd it.

As also the Pious and most Glorious Actions of our late Sovereign (whilst blest with a Wife and Able Ministry, and with the Bravest and Best of Generals) Crown'd with many and most Glorious Victories, and, (which was yet a greater Honour to Her) with many Vertues.

The great and lasting Good she did, by Uniting the Two Kingdoms, her true Zeal for true Religion, express'd in Her chearful Bounty to the Clergy, and Pious Care for Erecting Churches for the Worship of God, ought never to be forgotten; but *wheresoever the Gospel shall be Preached* by any of her Subjects, the Natives of this Land, the Ministers of this Church, *there should also these Things which this Woman, this Pious Queen, hath done be told for a Memorial of her.* (b)

But

(a) Bp. Burnet's Abridgment. pag. ult. (b) *Matt.* 26. 13.

But to both these excellent Princes, King *William* and Queen *Anne*, we are all yet more peculiarly, more infinitely oblig'd, for the invaluable Blessing they have entail'd upon us, and our latest Posterity, the Settlement of the Crown on a Race of Princes of the Reform'd Religion.

By which (after they themselves had Ministered to the Church as long as they could) they have taken the most effectual Care to secure it for ever.

And no doubt is to be made but that our present most Gracious Sovereign (who has already given such evident Proofs both of his Wisdom and Goodness) will, by God's Blessing, yet further, and more eminently fulfil the Promise in the Text, by fulfilling his own.

For His Majesty has given Assurance to his People, in his most gracious Answers to their humble Addresses, *That he will always maintain the Reform'd Religion, and the Establish'd Church, and afford the Bishops and Ministers of it his especial Favour and Protection.*

From him, and from his Illustrious Family, we may all justly, and with Confidence, expect the glorious Reverse of our few *Cloudy Days*, and indeed a perpetual Sun shine and Tranquility.

Unless our own Sins, our Follies, and Divisions, should disappoint his Majesty's pious Cares and gracious Endeavours to make us happy, raise new Clouds, and bring new Storms and Ruins on us.

These Sons of Strangers (as some account them) shall Minister unto the Church, and more effectually Build up her Walls than any, than all her own Sons have ever done, render it more Firm, and more United, more Reform'd and Pure, more truly Great and Glorious than ever.

Unless we, like the *Jews* of old, at the Siege of *Jerusalem*,

Jerusalem (a) readily resolve to divide and ruin it, and let in the *Romans*.

To prevent this, to prevent, however, our having any the least Hand in so great a Wickedness, give me leave,

3. To make Application, and to shew you what is the true Use of this Promise in the Text, and of what hath now been said upon it. And,

1. Let us all be thankful to Almighty God for so Rich a Promise, and for his most Gracious fulfilling of it to the Church in general, in former Ages, and to our selves in this.

It is St. Paul's Exhortation and Injunction to Christians, 1 Tim. 2. 2. *That first of all Thanksgivings, as well as Prayers, be offer'd up to God for Kings, and for all that are in Authority over us; for the whole Ministry, and for all Magistrates in general.*

For this, says he, is good, good in it self, and acceptable unto God our Saviour.

Government, in it self, is so great a Blessing, so absolutely necessary, that 'tis impossible for us to be safe, or to live without it.

The *Persians* (as Puffendorf (b) observes in his Law of Nations) took the true way to demonstrate this to the meanest Capacity:

Upon the Death of any of their Kings they Liv'd five days without any Laws or Restraints whatever, that the People finding, by a sad Experience, the dreadful Effects of *Mobs* and *Tumults*, might be the more desirous of, and the more firmly Loyal to their next Sovereign.

Since Miracles are ceas'd, Laws are necessary, as well

(a) *Josephus de Bell. Jud. Lib. 6. C. 1. &c.* (b) *Puffendorf Lib. 7. C. 1, and 7.*

well as Preaching, in order to reform and to save the World.

There is need (says Dr. Jackson) of Coercive Laws, or the Execution of them, for binding our Patients to a right Diet, to oblige them to be sober, whilst they are under our Cure. (a)

Without this, I fear, our best Endeavours, our best Sermons will be lost upon them.

The Laws of Discipline are some of the strongest and the most necessary of the Churches Walls, and these (as Mr. Thorndike well observes (b)) tho' made at first, or agreed on by the Clergy, must receive their Sanction, their Life and Power, from the Government.

Now if Government in general be so great a Blessing, how thankful should we all be for such a Government, for such a King, for such a numerous Race of excellent Princes of our own Religion, as we are now Blest with? The Supports and Glory of our Church and Nation.

2. Let the Remembrance of God's former, and the Experience of his present Mercies to us, engage us to put our Trust in him for the time to come.

Psal. 118. 8, 9. It is better to Trust in the Lord than to put Confidence in Man, or even in Princes.

Princes are the Instruments of the Publick Happiness, but God alone is the Author of it; he therefore must be the sole Object of our *Religious* Trust.

We may, we ought to have other Kings, but must have no other God but he.

3. Let us therefore all resolve by Well-doing, by Repentance and Reformation, to make God our Friend before

(a) Jackson's Works Tom. 2. pag. 590. (b) Thorndike de ratione finiendi controversi. in Towersen's Decalog. pag. 250.

before we presume to claim or to apply his Promises.

For tho' our Kings were as wise and as good as Angels, yet our Sins may ruin both them and our selves.

1 Sam: 12. 25. *If ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your King.*

A wicked Nation is a Nation of Traytors, and every Sin that cries for Vengeance is an Act of Treason against the State.

We all profess to serve our King and Country with our Lives and Fortunes; we are willing, upon occasion, to Fight and Die; let us be willing also to live for them, to live so as that God may bless them.

4. Since the Church of Christ is so dear to God that he engages Kings themselves (who are his Deputies, his Vicegerents upon Earth) to *Build up its Walls, and to Minister unto it*, let it be dear also to every one of us who have the Honour and the Happiness to be Members of it.

And let us shew our Zeal for that *Excellent Church*, which, by the Goodness of God, is establish'd by our Laws, and protected by our Princes; not by *Railing* against others, but by *Living* well our selves.

Amongst the *Distinctions* coyn'd of late to ruin us, this is one,

That there be some that be Of, but not For the Church.

But sure it were as true and as proper to say (what has been long observ'd and much lamented by all good Men, by all true Church-Men) *That there be some (indeed too many) who pretend to be both of and for the Church; Zealous (or rather Furious for it)*

it) but not for the *Religion* of the Church; indeed for no *Religion*.

They are for the Church consider'd as a Party, not for it as a Church is describ'd by the Church it self in the nineteenth of her Thirty nine Articles.

A Congregation of faithful Men, where the pure Word of God is Preach'd and his Sacraments Administred.

They are for little or no Preaching, for no Practice at all; for no Sacraments except it be for Ceremony only, or to qualify for a Place.

In a Word, they would have a Church without Religion, a Church without any Christians in it; nay, a civil Heathen would be counted a Dissenter.

Such have too long presum'd to call themselves Church-men, the best, the only Church-men, who really are the greatest Scandals to the Church, and justly deserve to be cut off from it.

The several Vertues of a Christian Life are the Houses and Palaces, the Ornaments and the Glory of this City of God; but if these be decay'd and gone, to what purpose should our Kings build up its Walls?

If therefore we profess to love the Church, this excellent Church of which we are Members, let us love and practice the Religion of the Church.

Our doing this will best secure it against all Opposition; for this will most effectually recommend it to the Love and Care of all good Men, of all good Princes, and of God himself.

5. Since our Kings, by the Grace of God, and according to his Promises, are become our Nursing-Fathers, the Defenders of our Faith, and Protectors of our Church: Since (as *Isaiah* prophesied) they build

up its Walls, and minister unto it: let us not grudge the Title and the Power which God and the Laws of the Land have given him, I mean his Supremacy.

To this His Majesty has as clear a Right as to the Crown he wears: And to that he has as just, as clear a Title, as any Prince in the World can have: A Right by the known Laws and Statutes of the Realm, and by the manifest Will and Providence of God.

Kings and Princes minister to the Church, not as Servants and Slaves, (as the Pope would have them) not as common Members (as some others) but as Nursing Fathers, as Supreme Heads and Governours of it.

This Supremacy of the Crown, (which is one of the Flowers, one of the Jewels of it) hath been long enjoy'd by our English Kings. For (as our Church-Historian Dr. Fuller (a) tells us, from an Authentick Manuscript in the Cottonian Library) King Edgar styl'd himself God's Vicar in England, for the ordering of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

In a Word, 'tis not only confirm'd by several Statutes, but expressly declar'd in the Canons (b) of our Church, and her Articles (c) of Religion.

6. Let us all express our Gratitude to God, for so rich a Blessing as the Text promises, and we now enjoy, by our chearful Loyalty and Obedience to the Government.

Let us Fear God, and Honour the King, and not meddle with them that be given to change. (d)

This is the Duty of all Subjects, and 'tis the Clergy's Duty to mind them of it. Titus 3. 1. Put them

(a) Church History Lib. 2. pag. 132. (b) Canon 55. (c) Art. 37. (d) Prov. 24. 21. compar'd with 1 Pet. 2. 17.

them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates.

All Governments may command our Obedience, but this should also command our Love.

Such a King as we are now blest with should command not our Persons and our Purse only, but our Hearts: And as David did, 2 Sam. 19. 14. Bow the Hearts of all his Subjects, as the Heart of one Man.

With united Hearts and Voices we should all offer up our most joyful Praises, our most ardent Prayers unto Heaven for him.

That God who sets up and governs Kings) may protect his Person, disappoint his Enemies, prosper his Government, and prolong his Days.

That he may be yet more Glorious than all our former Kings; more effectually, more successfully minister to the Church, and build up her Walls; heal our Breaches; unite our Minds; and reform our Manners.

That under Him and his Royal Posterity, we and our Children after us, may lead Quiet, Peaceable, and most Happy lives, in all Godliness and Honesty, and at last be translated to Eternal Bliss:

Which God of his Mercy grant for the sake of his Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

them in mind to be subject to Principality and Power
to the Magistrate.

All Governments may command our Obedience,
but this should also command our Love.

Such a King as we are now blest with should
command not our Fear and our Trust only,
but our Hearts: And as David did, 2 Sam. 15.
14. How the Heart of all his Subjects, at the Heart of
the Man.

With united Hearts and Voices we should all offer
up our most joyful Prayers, our most ardent Prayers
unto Heaven for him.

That God who sits up and governs Kings
may protect his Person, dispossess his Enemies,
prolong his Government, and prolong his Days.

That he may be yet more glorious than all our
former Kings; more effectually, more successfully
minister to the Church, and build up her Walls;
heal our Breaches; our Minds; and reform
our Manners.

That under His Majesty's Royal Majesty, we and
our Children may live in Peace, Prosperity,
and most happy lives in all Godliness and Honour, and
at last be translated to Eternal Bliss:

Which God of his Mercy grant for the sake of his
Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ; to whom with
the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and
Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

